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The Prime Minister's Visit to Bermuda

20th-23rd December, 1961

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INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 1961 it became clear that the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, France and the Federal German Republic would not find it easy to reach agreement on the methods to be adopted in handling the Berlin crisis.

It had been arranged that meetings would be held in November between President Kennedy and Dr. Adenauer and between Mr. Macmillan and President de Gaulle. In a telephone conversation on 27th October, Mr. Macmillan and President Kennedy agreed that it might be desirable for them to meet thereafter; and the President suggested a meeting in December, possibly in Bermuda. On 3rd December President Kennedy proposed, through the United Kingdom Ambassador in Washington, that this meeting should take place in Bermuda on 21st and 22nd December. Mr. Macmillan agreed, and a public announcement was made on the following day.

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agreement work. The truth of the matter was that Adoula was not competent to run the whole country because he had no administration. There was no army, no police and no Civil Service. The United Nations ought to aim at replacing their 15,000 troops by 2,000 French-speaking administrators.

Mr. Rusk asked if *Mr. Tshombe* could control his own side and compel them to cease firing if the United Nations stopped. *Lord Home* said that he thought this would be possible if the United Nations troops left Katanga but until they did the mercenaries would go on making trouble. *Mr. Rusk* said that if the United Nations forces left Katanga, *Tshombe* would go back on any agreement for a settlement and would secede again. *Lord Home* agreed that this was a danger but said that in any case he did not believe that Katanga could be held down by force in present circumstances.

Mr. Macmillan said that he was worried about the reported agreement between Adoula and Tshombe because he felt that it was too far contrary to Tshombe's original line for him to have accepted it except under duress. Of course there might be some agreement about money which was not included in the seven points. *Mr. Rusk* said that he believed there was an exchange of letters but he had not yet got the text.

President Kennedy suggested that he and *Mr. Macmillan* should issue a statement which would make it clear that the United Kingdom and United States Governments were at one in seeking an agreement for an integrated Congo, and urging Adoula and Tshombe to continue to work together. He suggested waiting for an hour or so to see if there was further news from the Congo and then issuing a statement on these lines. *Mr. Macmillan* agreed.

Bermuda,

21st December, 1961.

(8)

RECORD OF A MEETING AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BERMUDA,
ON THURSDAY, 21st DECEMBER, 1961, AT 4 p.m.

Present:

UNITED KINGDOM

The Right Hon. Harold Macmillan,
 M.P.
 The Right Hon. the Earl of Home
 The Right Hon. Sir David Ormsby
 Gore
 The Right Hon. Sir Norman Brook
 Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh
 Mr. A. C. I. Samuel

UNITED STATES

President Kennedy
 Mr. Dean Rusk
 Mr. David Bruce
 Mr. McG. Bundy
 Mr. Charles Bohlen
 Mr. William Tyler

Berlin

President Kennedy said that it was his intention that the United States Ambassador in Moscow (*Mr. Thompson*) should see *Mr. Gromyko* between Christmas and the New Year and begin the soundings designed to ascertain whether there was a basis for negotiation on the Berlin question. The President handed round a draft of the instructions to be sent to *Mr. Thompson* for this purpose.

Mr. Rusk said that all the NATO countries except France were anxious for us to go ahead with this probe and even the French had acquiesced in it. *Lord Home* added that the French were even willing for the probe to go some way into questions of substance. *Mr. Rusk* made it clear that the draft instructions to *Mr. Thompson* were for the first talk only and therefore did not go into substance. We should have to consider on what basis we wanted to approach the substance of the matter and, secondly, what procedures we proposed to use in order to get

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negotiations going. He himself thought that the next stage might be a meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers. He feared that unless we pushed hard both on substance and on procedure little progress would be made.

President Kennedy asked whether any additions could be made to the draft instructions for Mr. Thompson's first talk with Mr. Gromyko. *Lord Home* said that he assumed that the Ambassador would first ask Mr. Gromyko what his ideas were on access to Berlin and would then himself put forward the suggestion that there might be an international highway or an international authority over the autobahn. He might add that he knew that there were other matters in which the Soviet Government were interested and that he was prepared to talk about them as well.

President Kennedy asked whether it would be wise to suggest that any international highway should be international not only in East German territory but also for an equal distance into the Federal Republic. *Lord Home* replied that he doubted whether the idea of an international highway was likely to be acceptable.

Lord Home said that on the substance of the matter there were four points on which we might have to make some concession if a settlement was to be secured: first, some *de facto* recognition of the D.D.R.; second, recognition of the Oder-Neisse line; third, our occupation rights; and fourth, the links between West Berlin and the Federal Republic. So far as occupation rights were concerned, we obviously could not give them up but we might have to find a way of converting them into something else or superimposing something else on them. We might be able to present our position in West Berlin as that of trustees for the people of the city. In addition, we might strengthen our position by proving (by a plebiscite or otherwise) that we were in West Berlin by consent of its people.

Mr. Rusk said that the Soviet Government were always talking about recognising the facts of the situation. There were facts in our position too. It was a fact that we were in West Berlin and that we had access to it. They should be asked to recognise these facts just as we were willing to recognise that they were in East Berlin and in East Germany and that we had no intention of trying to force them out.

President Kennedy said that if we did find a way of converting our occupation rights into a trusteeship we could not agree that this should be limited in time or that it gave the Soviet Government equal rights with us in West Berlin. They should not, for instance, be given a right to put their troops into West Berlin. *Mr. Rusk* said that there might be some possibility of keeping our occupation rights in the background while not departing from our claim that they were the basis of our presence, and the Russians might agree to the fact of our rights without raising the question of their origin. He thought that the Germans disliked the idea of bringing the question of frontiers into a negotiation that was confined to Berlin. They would be more likely to consider a concession on this point in the framework of an all-German settlement. There were a number of formulae for dealing with the Oder-Neisse line, one of which was to say that we would accept it as the western frontier of Poland. *Lord Home* said that another was to say that we would recognise it as the eastern frontier of a united Germany. *President Kennedy* said that what the Russians wanted was a firm status for East Germany; he doubted whether they would be satisfied with formulae of this kind about the Oder-Neisse line: they were also interested in the demarcation line between East and West Germany. *Lord Home* said that Dr. Stikker had told him that Dr. Adenauer had said that he himself was willing to accept the Oder-Neisse line but that he could not say so in public. *Mr. Rusk* said that this was one of the few cards that the Germans had to play in their bid for an all-German settlement and they were anxious not to waste it.

In reply to a question by Mr. Macmillan *Mr. Bohlen* said that he thought the Russians would be very tough at first and it might seem that there was in fact no basis for negotiations. This was likely to confirm the French in their intransigence. *Mr. Rusk* said that the probe was aimed at the Russians and not at the French. We should try to find a *modus vivendi* which would preserve our rights without a war.

Lord Home asked when we could begin to reveal to the Russians the elements of a deal. *Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh* thought that there should be a series of talks without commitment in which we would air our ideas about access, about how far

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we could go towards recognition of the D.D.R., what we could accept and what we could not. We should hope to elicit replies from the Soviet Government and in this way a pattern of views would be built up out of which we might be able to identify the elements of an agreement. *Mr. Rusk* agreed with this.

Discussion then turned on the question whether Thompson should conduct the probe alone or whether the other Western Ambassadors could help. *Lord Home* thought that *Mr. Thompson* should have whatever help he thought best. *Sir Frank Roberts* would be available and it was unlikely that *Herr Kroll* would be inactive. *President Kennedy* thought that, while *Mr. Thompson* might conduct the early talks, it would be difficult for him to go on alone as the substance of the matter was approached. This would give the Germans the opportunity to make difficulties. *Mr. Bohlen* thought that so long as *Mr. Thompson* operated within the framework of the working paper agreed by the four Powers, the Germans were unlikely to make difficulties, but *Mr. Bundy* remarked that *Lord Home's* four points were just the points which were not agreed by the Four Powers.

Mr. Bohlen thought that if it came to a meeting of Foreign Ministers, the Germans might not want to take part and *Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh* suggested that a Foreign Ministers' meeting must be tripartite on the Western side, because if we had the West Germans with us the Russians would bring in the East Germans.

Lord Home said that *Mr. Thompson* would begin the probe by raising the subject of access. This would permit *Mr. Gromyko* to talk about recognising the sovereignty of the D.D.R. At this point *Mr. Thompson* might consult *Sir Frank Roberts* and *Herr Kroll* to see whether an agreed formula could be found in reply to this. *Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh* did not think that agreement would be found on formulae for each separate element: the points in the Four-Power working paper which were not agreed would never in fact be agreed in advance of formal negotiations.

President Kennedy then asked which would be the best, one Ambassador conducting the probe or a Foreign Ministers' conference which would include the Germans. *Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh* thought that the first step should be for *Mr. Thompson* to take the lead in the probe with *Sir Frank Roberts* and *Herr Kroll* helping where they could. *Mr. Bohlen* observed that the Germans' insistence on a narrow negotiation about Berlin alone meant that they would not be able to take part in negotiations with the Russians since they had no *locus standi* to discuss Berlin with the Russians.

Mr. Rusk said that in Paris he had got the impression from the *Quai d'Orsay* that French officials would like the Ambassadorial Group to continue so that the French could continue to play a part in this matter. He was anxious not to give the French and the Germans a chance of complaining that the whole thing was being conducted by the Anglo-Saxons nor did the United States want to carry alone an undefined responsibility. *Lord Home* thought that the Germans really did want to get negotiations going. The Foreign Minister, *Herr Schroeder*, had expressed to him in Paris his fears that if things dragged on West Berlin might die.

Discussion then turned to the question whether *Mr. Thompson* should hold out to the Russians the prospect that, if the probe showed that there was a basis for negotiations, we would proceed to more formal negotiations, first at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers and then of Foreign Ministers. *Mr. Rusk* said that he did not believe that a settlement could be achieved at a level lower than that of Foreign Ministers or possibly even of Heads of Governments.

Mr. Macmillan said that we should be clear about our objective. If we wanted an agreement there must be a conference or a negotiation. The situation at present was dangerous. There was anxiety and tension. And yet we could see that there was a basis for a settlement. All were agreed in principle that Germany must ultimately be united, though some of us were not enthusiastic at the prospect. Even the Russians would probably accept that one day there would be a united Germany. Meanwhile we must make a practical agreement. This must be based on facts. First, it was a fact that East Germany existed. Its existence could therefore be recognised. In practice the Federal Republic accepted that East Germany existed and conducted large-scale trade with it. The Federal Republic already recognised the existence of East Germany and dealt with it as a fact. Second, it was a fact that we were in West Berlin and intended to stay there. We might be able to find

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a new formula to convert our occupation rights into a trust, but this trust could of course derive from our occupation rights; the Russians must accept this. Third, since we were in West Berlin we had to go in and out. The Russians themselves must guarantee our military access which was only 5 per cent. of the traffic and they must arrange with the D.D.R. that the civilian traffic also continued as it was. Fourth, in return for our acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line, the Russians must accept that one day there would be a reunited Germany.

But for the Germans and the French, we should go in and try to make a deal with the Russians on these lines at once. Instead we were starting a probe. What was the purpose of this probe? Was it intended that the probe should lead to a Four-Power conference? If so, it might take the form of five or six conversations which would be in the nature of preparation before the principals met. He was afraid that, if that was not made clear, the Russians would not be impressed by what Mr. Thompson had to say and things would drift. The Russians would be the gainers from this drift. The Western Alliance would be more and more difficult to hold together; tension would increase and economic strain would become hard to bear. It was to our advantage to bring this to a head.

In reply to a question from President Kennedy, Lord Home said that he thought the Germans were keen to have negotiations but were nervous about what a settlement would entail. They would have no *locus standi* in a negotiation confined to Berlin but Herr Kroell could help with the probe. Mr. Thompson could say to Mr. Gromyko that he would like to have a series of conversations to see whether it would be possible to get a formal conference. Mr. Macmillan agreed with this. The object of the probe would be to ensure that a subsequent conference was a success. Mr. Bohlen said it should be put to the Russians that there could be a conference only if the probe showed that there was a prospect of success. It would be better not to begin by saying that we wanted a conference. If we did, the Russians would give nothing away during the probe but would simply await the conference.

President Kennedy asked whether it would be possible to have a conference without the French. Mr. Rusk thought that if the British and the Americans and the Germans agreed that there was a basis for negotiation at a meeting of Foreign Ministers, the French would not stay out. In answer to Lord Home's question whether it would be possible to make an agreement on Berlin without the French, Sir David Ormsby Gore and Mr. Bohlen pointed out that it was the British and the Americans who gave the French their rights in Berlin: the original agreement with the Russians had been made by the British and the Americans only and the French sector had come out of those allotted to the British and the Americans.

Mr. Macmillan asked what would happen if there was no conference. Lord Home replied that the next move would be up to the Russians: they would have to decide whether to sign a separate peace treaty and hand over the control of access to West Berlin to the East Germans with all the possibilities that Herr Ulbricht might create a conflict. Mr. Rusk said that the trouble was that the East Germans might not create a conflict but might nibble away at West Berlin. The inhabitants would then start moving out.

President Kennedy asked what would happen if, after the probe had taken place, the French still maintained that there was no basis for negotiations. We should have to decide whether to move on to a Foreign Ministers' conference even if there had been no improvements at the lower level. He was inclined to think that this might be necessary. He had been struck by the fact that it was only after talking personally to Dr. Adenauer that he had realised that the German Chancellor was so keen on negotiations. These things did not become clear if we dealt with people at arm's length. As one of the main difficulties would be over recognition of the D.D.R., in which we could go only so far as the Germans would agree, the problem might have to be dealt with round a table. He agreed that we should make clear to the Russians that, although we were anxious for negotiations, they could not be held unless and until there was some promise of success. The Russians knew that we had difficulties with the French over this and there would be no point in concealing it.

It was then agreed that Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh and Mr. Bohlen would examine the draft instructions to Mr. Thompson with a view to making it clear in them that we were working towards a conference but that this must depend on whether the

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probe showed that there was any chance of success. They would also consider whether these instructions should be shown to the Germans and the French. Mr. Rusk's original idea had been that the general line should be cleared with the Germans and that the French should be offered a sight of them if they wished. There was, however, some doubt whether it would be politic to let the French know that the instructions were specifically aimed at achieving a Four-Power Conference. Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh and Mr. Bohlen would consider whether this point should be put separately to Mr. Thompson. They would also consider whether it would be possible for Mr. Thompson's first contact with Mr. Gromyko to take place so early as the President had at first suggested. They would also look at the draft of a reply which Mr. Macmillan might send to Mr. Khrushchev's latest letter and would consider whether such a reply could usefully supplement the soundings which Mr. Thompson would be making in Moscow.

Bermuda,

21st December, 1961.

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RECORD OF A MEETING AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BERMUDA, ON THURSDAY, 21st DECEMBER, 1961, AT 5.15 p.m.

Nuclear Tests

The record of this meeting has been printed separately.

Bermuda,

21st December, 1961.

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RECORD OF A MEETING AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BERMUDA, ON FRIDAY, 22nd DECEMBER, 1961, AT 9.45 a.m.

Present:

UNITED KINGDOM

The Right Hon. Harold Macmillan,
M.P.
The Right Hon. The Earl of Home
The Right Hon. Sir David Ormsby
Gore
The Right Hon. Sir Norman Brook
Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh
Mr. A. C. I. Samuel

UNITED STATES

President Kennedy
Mr. Dean Rusk
Mr. David Bruce
Mr. Charles Bohlen
Mr. McG. Bundy
Mr. William Tyler

Berlin

Mr. Rusk began by saying that the British redraft of the proposed instructions to Mr. Thompson indicated that we were looking forward to a long series of talks whereas the United States draft envisaged an early move to a more formal negotiation. Lord Home said that it was not the British intention that there should be a long drawn out series of talks: but we must ensure that there was not a break after only one talk. Mr. Rusk accepted this as long as it was quite clear that the probe was intended to lead to a conference. The American idea was that the Russians would be obliged to give a definite indication at an early stage but he certainly did not want an *impasse* after the first meeting.

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Mr. Macmillan said that he understood that the American position was that they wanted to know after the second or third meeting whether or not there could be a conference at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers. He agreed that this was the right approach but he wondered what would happen if the conversations revealed that there was no basis for such negotiations. Should we simply await events, as President de Gaulle intended to do? *Mr. Rusk* thought that it would be up to the Russians to say what they proposed to do. We should have to consider with them how a conflict could be prevented: perhaps something like "solution C" would then come in useful.

President Kennedy said that, if it appeared that *Mr. Thompson* was not getting very far, we should have to consider how to demonstrate the reasonableness of our position and thereby justify the military and economic efforts that would be demanded. The United States would certainly be accused of being unreasonable and this was not a good position for the United States to be in *vis-a-vis* their European allies. He felt that we could not simply break off contact with the Russians after the United States Ambassador had failed to make progress. If it looked as though the Russians were going to sign a separate peace treaty it would be necessary to summon a conference of Foreign Ministers. *Mr. Rusk* said that another way of doing this would be to summon *Mr. Gromyko* to come to New York during the resumed session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. Macmillan agreed with *President Kennedy* that Europe would not put up with prolonged military and economic stresses unless there had been negotiations. Either these negotiations were brought about by *Mr. Thompson's* probe or, if that failed, we should have to take other steps to secure a meeting, in order to show that we had done everything possible to avert a war. Something more than contacts at Ambassadorial level would be necessary. *Sir David Ormsby Gore* pointed out that there could be two kinds of Foreign Ministers' meeting: one would be to carry on discussions for reaching agreement over Berlin after *Mr. Thompson's* probe had shown the way: the other would be a meeting to discuss how to avoid a conflict after *Mr. Thompson's* conversations had shown that there was no basis for a negotiated settlement.

Lord Home wondered whether there was enough substance in *Mr. Thompson's* instructions. When, for instance, should he try out our ideas about converting our occupation rights into a trusteeship and about recognition? What should he say if his remarks about access caused *Mr. Gromyko* to bring up the question of respect for the sovereignty of the D.D.R.? *Mr. Bohlen* said that *Mr. Thompson* could hardly be instructed to go any further than the draft indicated as that would mean going beyond the Four Power working paper. *Mr. Rusk* was more hopeful than *Lord Home* that *Mr. Gromyko* would be willing to hold serious discussions with *Mr. Thompson* on the basis of the latter's instructions and *Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh* said that the instructions gave *Mr. Thompson* authority to draw on Annex 3 of the working paper which contained a good deal of substance. *Lord Home* thought that the idea of converting our occupation rights into a form of trusteeship should be put into the Ambassadorial Group so that it could be ready for *Mr. Thompson* to use. *Mr. Bundy* feared that the Germans in the Ambassadorial Group would object to it, though *Mr. Rusk* thought they might accept it if it were made clear that it was superimposed on our occupation rights. Incidentally, though he liked the idea, *Mr. Rusk* did not like the word "trusteeship" and thought that another should be found.

President Kennedy did not like the idea of using the Ambassadorial Group as a means of putting more substance into *Mr. Thompson's* instructions. Progress in the Ambassadorial Group was slow, since both the French and German Ambassadors constantly made reservations. He wondered whether it would not be better for the British and the Americans to agree among themselves first and then for *Mr. Rusk* to clear points direct with *Herr Schroeder* and, if necessary, with *M. Couve de Murville*. It had struck him very forcibly how different the attitude of *Dr. Adenauer* himself had been towards negotiations compared with that of his Ambassador in Washington.

Mr. Macmillan reverted to the problem of what to do if *Mr. Thompson's* talks gave no promise of a successful negotiation. *Lord Home* said that he was in favour of putting more substance into *Mr. Thompson's* instructions. *Mr. Rusk* did not think there should be any "trading points" in the first talk and he could not believe that

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the Russians would refuse serious negotiations either for a settlement of the Berlin problem or, at the worst, about the measures that should be taken to deal with the crisis that would follow a breakdown. *President Kennedy* wondered how it would be possible to get the Germans to agree to anything beyond what was already in Mr. Thompson's instructions. Perhaps Mr. Thompson should go ahead as was now proposed but in the meanwhile the Americans and the British should be thinking how far they could go on such subjects as relations with the D.D.R. After that, Mr. Rusk should try to persuade Herr Schroeder to agree with what we proposed. The British and the Americans could also work out some way of converting our occupation rights into something more acceptable and put that to the Germans as well. *Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh* thought that this should perhaps await the result of Mr. Thompson's first conversation. *Lord Home* thought that instead of an approach by Mr. Rusk to Herr Schroeder it might be better for the British and American Ambassadors in Bonn to deal with him.

Lord Home asked how it would be possible to make use of Herr Kroll during the probe in Moscow. Mr. Rusk thought that he should be kept informed but not brought into the actual meetings with Mr. Gromyko.

President Kennedy asked whether Mr. Thompson's instructions should be shown to the Germans and the French. Mr. Bohlen suggested that the instructions should be shown to the Germans, who would not be likely to object to them as they did not go far into substance, but that the French should merely be informed of what was intended.

It was agreed that *Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh* and Mr. Bohlen should redraft the instructions in the light of the discussion and should in particular make it clear that Mr. Thompson's probe should not be long drawn out nor yet so brief as to risk a breakdown after a very short time.

It was also agreed that the draft reply to Mr. Khrushchev's letter to the Prime Minister was a good statement of the Western position and, with a few changes which could be worked out between the British and the Americans, it could be sent off. It was agreed too that it should contain a paragraph which would refer to the last NATO communiqué and would look forward to Mr. Thompson's probe. This would help with the problem of timing. *President Kennedy* thought that, even though Mr. Khrushchev had withdrawn his threat to sign a peace treaty by the end of the year, it would be best if the West showed some activity before then. Otherwise Mr. Khrushchev could say that we had made no effort at all. Mr. Macmillan agreed with this and it was decided that besides including a paragraph in the Prime Minister's reply to Mr. Khrushchev foreshadowing Mr. Thompson's approach, he should be instructed to ask before 31st December for an appointment with Mr. Gromyko, even though the meeting might take place after that date. There would be no need for the instructions to be put in final form here in Bermuda. They could be rewritten in Washington and passed to the British through Sir David Ormsby Gore.

Bermuda,

22nd December, 1961.

(11)

RECORD OF A MEETING AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BERMUDA,
ON FRIDAY, 22nd DECEMBER, 1961, AT 10.30 a.m.

Nuclear Tests

The record of this meeting has been printed separately.

Bermuda,

22nd December, 1961.

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